EDNET Faculty Training Workshop
A Scenario 4 U

A professional development Scenario is provided below. The process of the scenario is most important…not the specific content.

SCENARIO # 3
Technology, Teaching, and Learning: The Chicken or the Egg

       Your name is Sharon Forsythe and you are 45 years old. After receiving your Ph.D. in economics from Yale in 1975, you accepted your first and only teaching position here at York University in California. Today, after 20 years of teaching, you are well established in your profession, and well respected and liked by your colleagues. Y you have received several national awards for your research and been awarded two commendations for outstanding teaching on your campus.

       Recently, you have been asked by the president of the university to form a committee of one faculty member from each of the colleges to recommend a delivery system or combination of systems for a new distance-learning program that will be instituted next year. York University does not have an instructional television department, but the audiovisual department has a small television studio. There is a full time graphic artist in this department. There is also a separate FACT (Faculty Assistance CenTer). The presence of the university on the World Wide Web is dependent on individual instructor initiatives.

       During the first several meetings of this committee, a number of members have strongly suggested that a World Wide Web delivery system be instituted campus-wide. Other members have suggested that the university purchase a two-way video teleconferencing system. Two of the members feel that distance learning is just a passing fad and will not last. After listening to the arguments for the different delivery system, you ask why the WWW or two-way video teleconferencing should be instituted. One of the committee, Peter Conrad, states that the quality of any of the distance learning delivery systems cannot be as good as the on-campus courses and that the overall quality of the courses will be denigrated. He states that he cannot understand why the administration would want to begin such a program in the first place. Several of the other committee members agree with Peter. You ask if technology should drive teaching and learning or if teaching and learning should drive the selection of the technology? At this point the committee members are quite confused. One even asks to disband the committee. Each member is asked to look into the advantages and disadvantages of each of the delivery technologies—audio, video, computing (WWW, Internet, Computer Mediated Instruction), and print. They are asked to report their findings at the next meeting in three weeks.

       YOUR TASK: *During the next 15 minutes, working as a committee team, appoint a spokesperson and recommend which of the delivery systems or combination of systems should be implemented at York University and the reasons for your choice. Cost is a consideration but not the determining factor. Use your knowledge of distance learning and any experience that you may have had with it. You may not ask any questions of the instructor at this point. You will be asked to make a one-minute summary of your recommendations. Use the space below for notes as needed.*